

## Five Days in Chicago: The UAHC Biennial

**Wednesday, 28 October:** We have arrived! 3,500 Reform Jews, gathered in Chicago for the biennial conference of the UAHC, prepare to meet CSZ's delegation, Irene Ogus, Richard Inlander, Rabbi Kahn and me, Mike Rankin.

**Thursday, 29 October:** Start working on the resolution on AIDS prepared by the UAHC AIDS Committee. Two hours later, still stuck on the issue of mandatory testing. All of us on the committee oppose it, but will the delegates agree? Might a strong statement on testing lose us the remaining components: adequate funding, education, confidentiality and the rest? Ultimately, we equivocate. "While the issue of mandatory testing is still debated," we write, "we assert that *all* testing, whether mandatory or voluntary, must be accompanied by counseling, education and the maintenance of confidentiality." Not good, we think; hardly a statement of passion and courage. But at least it will probably be approved.

Committee breaks nine hours later, at 6 pm. Skip dinner to take a quick nap, getting ready for my workshop: "A Time to Understand: Lesbian, Gay and Jewish—Current Issues and Expressions."

At 9:10 the four panelists begin: Agnes Herman, mother of a gay man; Richard Inlander, who will talk about being a gay parent and raising a couple of teenagers; John Hirsh, gay member of a mainstream congregation; and myself. I introduce the topic quickly, then show slides of "A Year in the Life of Sha'ar Zahav." They are entranced. We're not at all what they expected. I

*Continued on page 8*



Chanukah Party

## "Starlight Excess"

**D**oes the thought of meeting that special woman/man make your top go spinning? Have you ever thought you might get latke and win some extra gelt (cash) for that winter vacation?

One or both of these dreams can come true at "Starlight Excess," the 11th annual Chanukah party of our congregation. We welcome members, friends, children—everybody who would like to enjoy a lovely afternoon of fun, food, music, dancing, storytelling, all in a delightful lakeside setting.

Giving gelt for Chanukah is an ancient tradition, so please, please sell those raffle tickets we sent you. And then, call and order more. The more tickets you buy the greater your chances of winning and the more we can provide for our community throughout the year. Raffle-ticket sales directly support programs like education, visits to the sick and elderly, the printing of prayerbooks, even mun-

dane but necessary things like cleaning our window curtains. And you wouldn't want to miss the exciting drawing of the winning tickets—so come to the party.

*Date:* Sunday, December 20

*Time:* 2–6 pm

*Place:* Lake Merced Boat House

*Admission:* \$5 members, \$7 guests. All children free.

Lake Merced Boat House is located at the junction of Skyline Boulevard and Harding Road and can be reached via the number 18 Muni bus. Call 673-MUNI for additional information.

Remember to bring your own menorah and candles for our communal candle lighting. There's still time to volunteer to help Rosalinda put this all together, so give her a call and offer your services.

We look forward to seeing you spin the dreidel; and watch as luck and love unfold before you.

—The Chanukah Committee



## Owning a Home of Our Own

Since becoming president I have been impressed on a number of occasions by many different people's reactions to the fact that we own our building. Visitors from sibling congregations who come to pray with us on Friday nights have commented, "You are so lucky to have this beautiful building!"

Whenever I talked with people at the UAHC biennial convention in Chicago, they knew who we were and they wanted to know how we were doing. In particular they asked how many members we had and whether we had a building of our own. Without exception, they were impressed and happy for us at hearing how our numbers had grown, and were thrilled that we had been able to purchase and maintain a building.

Members of CSZ who remember when we bought our building will understand that the joy and pride I feel is, in large measure, because I had the privilege of making a direct financial contribution to the purchase. The building campaign, "A Home of Our Own," which Irene Ogus spearheaded, produced a feeling of camaraderie and excitement that was unprecedented in our synagogue life. We all see the results every time we enter our building.

Many of you who joined after we purchased the building did not have the opportunity to share in that experience. Nevertheless, the building belongs to you; it is *your* home; it belongs to all of us.

Owning a home of our own is not only a source of joy and pride; it is also a source of financial responsibility. Thanks to the success of the building campaign, which raised \$200,000, our mortgage is relatively small (\$35,000), but building maintenance and repairs are, and will continue to be, significant burdens. Remodeling the rabbi's study and office manager's premises reduced the balance in our Building Fund to a low level of \$4,000. This year necessary roof repairs cost us over \$2,000 and reduced our reserves even further. And we will be needing a new roof soon: it will cost several thousand dollars. We do not have the money. The foundation needs work. Exterior paint will not last

forever. Further remodeling and redecoration require additional funds. And so it goes. Home ownership is expensive.

Having all of this in mind, our congregation voted at its last meeting to authorize an annual building assessment of \$30 per adult wage earner. This is simply part of the cost of home ownership and support for our synagogue that is the responsibility of each of our members. In January, members of Congregation Sha'ar Zahav will receive a statement concerning the 1988 building assessment of \$30.

I have written in past columns about how we all contribute to Sha'ar Zahav in different ways. Financial support of our building through contributions to the Building Fund and through the building assessment are ways that each of us can help to maintain our wonderful synagogue. When we do this, every one of us can truly share in the joy and pride of owning a home of our own.

—Richard Inlander, President

## New Members

The Membership Committee is pleased to announce that our congregation gained several new members in November. A warm welcome to the latest people to join our family:

David Friedmann  
Steven Gaynes  
Pat Goldman  
Sandy Lofchie  
Eve Meyer  
Pam Ruskin & Suzy Shimek  
Ruth Schoenbach  
Arthur Slepian  
Lesley & Elena Sternin-Moser  
Randy Weiss

New members are welcomed and honored at Friday night services on the last Friday of the month. By making them feel a part of our family, we can all help to show our new members that they have a valuable place at Sha'ar Zahav.

## Condolences

We at Congregation Sha'ar Zahav extend our sympathy to the following members who have suffered a recent loss:

To **Richard Inlander** on the recent loss of his friend, Gary Nelson.

To **Ben Schalit** on the recent loss of his friend, Martin Sutherland.

To **Rick Crane** on the recent loss of his friend, Rick Hoffman.

To **Allen Brandstein** on the recent loss of his friend, Hans Andrew Jutus.

To **Jonathan Schwartz** on the recent loss of his friend, George Jolbert.

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Members of the Congregation receive the *Forward*. For a donation of \$12/year, non-members will receive the *Forward*.

All newsletter copy should be typed, double-spaced and is due no later than the date of the Va'ad meeting. It should be sent to the synagogue office, marked to the attention of the *Forward*.

Members of the Newsletter Committee are Bob Goldware (Articles Coordinator), Peter Vishniac (Advertising Coordinator), Howard Blechman, Alex Ingersoll, Garry Koenigsberg, Irene Ogus, Alita Rosenfeld and David Stein (general editorial and production); Amy Blasenheim (photos); Frank Hyman, Ben Schalit, Sam Thal and Eli Weinstein (distribution). The *Forward* is typeset by David Lester, Pagesetter Typography and printed by Lou Greene.

**Display Ads** are \$15 per column inch for non-members and \$10 per column inch for members, with discounts available for size and frequency. Ads should be camera ready; any ads that require typesetting, camera and/or artwork will be subject to a one-time production charge.

**Classified Ads** are \$5 for up to 20 words, plus \$1 for each 10 additional words. No personals accepted.

Payment must accompany ad and should be sent to Congregation Sha'ar Zahav, 220 Danvers at Caselli, San Francisco, California 94114, marked attention *Forward* advertising. The advertising deadline is the 10th of the month. The *Forward* reserves the right to reject any ad for reasons of taste. For more information on advertising rates and charges, call the synagogue office at 861-6932.



## Kaiser Brunch for AIDS Patients

Sha'ar Zahav's new brunch program at Kaiser Hospital started with great success on Sunday morning, October 25. Almost 80 people—AIDS patients, their friends and family, hospital staff, and Sha'ar Zahav members and friends—joined together for a wonderful party. Howard Bobren, chair of this important event, produced a well-coordinated party with food, entertainment and decorations. He was ably assisted by members of the Bikkur Cholim Committee and many members of the congregation who donated time, food and energy.

Allen Harris, a CSZ member and nurse at Kaiser, suggested the idea for a monthly brunch. For our first brunch,



*Photos by David Stein.*

Michael Bettinger led an orientation session on the Friday night before the brunch.

On Sunday, Glenn Stoller supervised the beverage bar; Yvette Malamud and Leslie Bergson joined together as an entertainment duo; David Friedmann provided extraordinary quiches; Arthur Seidman created a vegetable fantasy and baking, cooking, shopping and schlepping was done by a great crew including Alan Young, Alex Ingersoll, Lennie Brill, Jeff Statnick, Sen Talley, Steve Cronenwalt, David Stein, Stuart Feihnor, Pearl Raz, Phil Charney, Sydni Rosenfeld, David Gass, Sandy Stone, Jane Graeven, Michael McCormick, Mark Vogel, Bernard Pechter, Jay Ladin, Larry Daniels, Rochelle Glickman, Nanci Stern, Lee Huth, Steve Elman, Bill Goldstein, Alan Craig, Daniel Halpern, Martin Sugarman and Rabbi Kahn. And Ralph Frischman provided the autumn decor.

We had fun at the brunch. The reactions of the Kaiser personnel ranged from admiration to ecstatic enthusiasm. AIDS patients joined our party and together we ate and drank, enjoyed good music and laughed. We want to continue this warm and wonderful atmosphere and we need your help. Contact Howard Bobren, 392-7977, and tell him you will cook, bake, serve, entertain or just be available to help. The brunch is scheduled for the last Sunday of each month; it is providing an important service and it's fun. Plan to be a part of the program; and remember, it is being made possible by our AIDS Fund, which depends on our continued generosity.





## Children of Sarah

*Dearer to God is the ger (convert) who has come of her own accord than all the crowds of Israelites who stood before Mount Sinai. For had the Israelites not witnessed the thunders, lightnings, quaking mountains and sounding trumpets, they would not have accepted the Torah. But the ger, who saw not one of those things, came and offered herself to the Holy One, and took the yoke of Heaven upon herself. Can anyone be dearer to God than this person?*

This *midrash* sums up the essence of the Jewish tradition's teaching about the honored place of converts in Judaism. Generations of persecution led many rabbis and Jews to question why anyone would choose to cast his or her lot in with the Jewish people. This in turn resulted in the perception that Judaism does not welcome converts. In recent years, the Reform movement has begun an aggressive out-reach campaign to the religiously unaffiliated, inviting them into the synagogue. At Sha'ar Zahav, our traditions of welcome and acceptance have always extended to Jews-by-choice. In Judaism and at CSZ, there has never been and should not be any distinction in the "Jewishness" of Jews-by-choice and Jews-by-birth.

Despite our official position, Jews-by-choice sometimes do feel uncomfortable in the synagogue. They ask themselves: "Am I *really* Jewish?" Will I ever understand all those words and

customs that others take for granted? Will I ever be accepted as a full member of the community?" Jews-by-birth sometimes contribute to their uncomfortableness by stating out loud—or more subtly—that a person not born Jewish is not a "full" Jew and can't fit in.

The attitude that only someone born to Jewish parents can be a full member of the Jewish community is, simply put, Jewish racism. To be part of the Jewish people means to be committed to the Covenant—it is not determined by genetics. In the 12th century, Moses Maimonides explained that the link between the Jews of today and our ancestors is a spiritual one rather than a biological one. Maimonides answered the question whether a proselyte should pray the *Avot* ("Our God and God of our ancestors...") in the first person:

"Abraham taught the whole people, educated them and let them know true faith and divine unity...Everyone who becomes a proselyte to the end of all generations and everyone who worships...God (in accordance with Torah) is a disciple of Abraham (and Sarah), all are members of their family...There is no difference at all between you and us in any respect. Do not make light of your descent. If we relate ourselves to the forefathers and mothers of the Jewish people, you are related to the Creator of the world...Abraham is your father (and Sarah your mother) and of all the righ-

teous who follow in (their) ways."

The convert who assumes the Hebrew name "child of Sarah and Abraham" does not reject her or his own past. Like Jacob becoming Israel, this new name symbolizes an added dimension of the self, without the loss or denial of what came before. "You know the heart of the stranger, having yourselves been strangers in the land of Egypt." Let us go out of our way to ensure that every member of our family is fully included and welcomed in our communal life.

\* \* \*

If you are considering conversion to Judaism, Lehrhaus Judaica offers *Introduction to Judaism* classes every semester. Classes are offered in San Francisco or Berkeley. For more information, call Hillel (333-4922) or the synagogue office.

### For Sale

Souvenir  
10th Anniversary  
Posters

*unfolded, suitable for framing*

\$10 each

To order, contact the  
synagogue office

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### Classified Ads

WANTED: Paid escort to opera for Alzheimer's disease victim. Must have car. Message phone 387-1825.

PALM SPRINGS—Elegant extra-large art-deco vacation home. Two bedrooms, 2 baths, pools, spas, tennis. Accommodates six in luxury. Spectacular vistas! Superb amenities. \$200 weekend, \$595 week. Dr. Lippa (714) 671-0707.



## Spotlight On...

### Rosalinda del Moral

If the name "Rosalinda del Moral" conjures up an image of an intense Latin lady, complete with a rose in her teeth and a "Hi, Baby" on her lips, you are not far wrong.

Rosalinda met Irene Ogus, her lover, in Puerto Rico where Irene was vacationing. Since early childhood, and for no obvious reason that she can now identify (except perhaps a too-intensive reading of Leon Uris' "Exodus"), Rosalinda had always been fascinated with Jews and Jewish culture.

Faster than you could have said "salsa con horseradish," she found herself in San Francisco, living with Irene. At that time, 1984, Irene was consumed with the purchase of the CSZ building, and that fervor ignited Rosalinda's talents.

From then until now, she has been putting her fire into the Social Program Committee, the Election Committee, the Membership Committee, the cookbook and, the latest and largest diamond on her tiara—the Chanukah Party Committee. With Rosalinda as its chair, this year's Chanukah Party at the Lake Merced Boathouse is likely to be the most diverting of all of these annual madcap productions.

While Irene was president, the full extent of Rosalinda's assets became apparent to those who had the luck and perseverance to work with her (both luck and perseverance are necessary to keep up with her breakneck pace). Irene feels Rosalinda would make the ideal Director of Protocol for the temple. She knows how to "work the room"—causing the various groups to swirl apart and form into new combinations. Always cleverly put together, she often dominates the look of our get-togethers with her bright dresses and notable earrings.

Rosalinda recalls her early days with us and how she felt when she noticed the "in-crowd" humming and working together. That was when she noticed what made the "in-crowd"—their working together as a group. Now she knows that the congregation members who look ruefully at today's "in-crowd" must remember that work on the synagogue's many committees or projects is the way to achieve the "joy of



belonging."

Our growing population of younger members is a source of particular joy to Rosalinda. She has taken a fond interest in Sonia Douglass, Sue Douglass' eight-year-old adopted daughter, who arrived here three years ago from Honduras.

Another source of joy is, as you might expect, dancing—salsa, of course, but also disco and ballroom. Rosalinda also enjoys movies, the theater and Hispanic cultural events. On bright fall Sundays, she and Irene can often be found swirling amid the festivity at El Rio in the Mission, a dance spot which seems to be re-instituting the lovely custom of Sunday outdoor afternoon tea dances, albeit with a Latin tinge.

Both Rosalinda and Irene consider walking and hiking their primary athletic activity. Rosalinda, fortunate to teach Spanish near one of San Francisco's many beautiful natural areas, is able to take daily walks in towering eucalyptus groves. A walk in the Marin headlands for the two of them must wait for the weekend.

When asked what she would like to emphasize to both new and established temple members, Rosalinda asked this interviewer to write (in all capital letters and in bold), "**GET INVOLVED.**" That's the way she feels the temple works best for the individual and for the community.

—Howard Blechman

## Social Action

### San Francisco: City of Refuge

The San Francisco Sanctuary Covenant and the Central American Refugee Committee (CRECE) are sponsoring a city-wide celebration to mark San Francisco's first anniversary as a City of Refuge for Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees. This reception will be held on Thursday, December 10, 6–9 pm, in the Veterans Building (Green Room), 401 Van Ness, San Francisco. Over 400 guests, including prominent city political and religious leaders are expected to attend. Requested donation is \$25.

This event will benefit the Sanctuary Covenant and CRECE, which help provide food and housing for refugees and coordinate efforts by Sanctuary congregations. The celebration will also honor the San Francisco Department of Public Health for its outstanding service to the Central American refugee community. Entertainment will be provided by the cast of *Nunsense* and other celebrity guests.

A number of CSZ members will be attending. For more information, call 824-6274 or 340-7408.

**Release of more Salvadoran refugees:** Good news! Fernando Baires, the young Salvadoran refugee due to be released with CSZ's bail money, was released at the last moment on his own recognizance, along with several other refugees. This meant that CSZ's Sanctuary Fund was able to provide bail for another Salvadoran refugee, Carlos Antonio Canas Portillo. Carlos, who is Jewish, was active in student organizations in El Salvador. He was kidnapped and tortured before fleeing to the United States. The San Francisco Jewish Family Service is helping Carlos with housing and legal assistance.

**DeConcini-Moakley bill:** There is still time to contact Senators Pete Wilson and Alan Cranston about this bill, which is now expected to come to a vote in the Senate in December. The bill would suspend deportation of Salvadoran refugees until a government study of the situation in El Salvador is completed. Wilson is considered a "swing" vote. Cranston has supported the bill.

—Ami Zusman,  
for the Social Action Committee



## Va'ad Report

The Va'ad met for its November meeting on the ninth, chaired by President Richard Inlander. In a *D'var Torah*, Rabbi Yoel Kahn described his feeling of spiritual renewal and larger sense of purpose after having experienced the UAHC biennial in Chicago, the recent evening of song and poetry with Adrienne Rich and the combined MCC/CSZ congregations.

Our delegates to the UAHC biennial (Rabbi Kahn, Irene Ogus, Mike Rankin and Richard Inlander) described their experiences and feelings and expressed their pride in the UAHC's recognition of our community service. UAHC Liaison Mike Rankin announced that the Northern California Regional AIDS Committee has been formed, with Dr. David Goldberg of Congregation Emanu-El as its chair.

Social Action Committee chair Ami Zusman discussed with the Va'ad ways to identify congregants' areas of interest in social-action projects, and explored ways to encourage participation. This led to a discussion of all committees' need for additional members, and of the opportunities and obligation that all members share in the work of the congregation.

Richard read a letter from Cary Norsworthy, the Food Bank Coordinator of the San Francisco AIDS Foundation, thanking Sha'ar Zahav for its continued support through the food baskets in our synagogue, the Yom Kippur food drive, and sales of Sha'ar Zahav's cookbook. Whenever you come to the synagogue is a good time to bring an item or two for the baskets we want to fill every week.

Don Albert, Finance Committee chair, gave the monthly Treasurer's report, and noted that contributions to the congregation's General Fund are significantly less than anticipated in this year's budget, although dues pledges are at a high level.

Rabbi Yoel Kahn urged congregants with concerns or comments to speak to him directly, and not to be afraid to bring up points with him. He also reported to the Va'ad on the progress of new liturgy development and work on a Shabbat manual and a new haggadah. Rabbi Kahn said his schedule precludes making evening appointments; however, he is available during most days.

## Chanukah Blessings

The Chanukah menorah is lit each night of Chanukah, beginning with one candle the first night and adding another each successive night.

Ba-ruch a-ta, A-do-nai E-lo-hei-nu,  
me-lech ha-o-lam, a-sher ki-de-sha-nu  
be-mits-vo-tav, ve-tsi-va-nu  
le-had-lik neir shel Cha-nu-ka.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ,  
מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ  
בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ  
לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל חֲנֻכָּה.

Blessed is Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, who hallows us through mitzvot and has commanded us to kindle the Chanukah lights.

Ba-ruch a-ta, A-do-nai E-lo-hei-nu,  
me-lech ha-o-lam, she-a-sa ni-sim  
la-a-vo-tei-nu ba-ya-mim ha-heim  
ba-ze-man ha-zeh.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ,  
מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁעָשָׂה נִסִּים  
לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם  
בְּזֶמַן הַזֶּה.

Blessed is Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, who performed wondrous deeds for our ancestors in days of old at this season.

(On the first night only)

Ba-ruch a-ta, A-do-nai E-lo-hei-nu,  
me-lech ha-o-lam, she-he-che-ya-nu  
ve-ki-ye-ma-nu ve-hi-gi-a-nu  
la-ze-man ha-zeh.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ,  
מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהֵחֵיָנוּ  
וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ  
לְזֶמַן הַזֶּה.

Blessed is Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, for giving us life, for sustaining us, and for enabling us to reach this season.

Robin Leonard, Membership Committee chair, reported that with November's new members, Congregation Sha'ar Zahav's membership now exceeds 400. Robin thanked the members of the Va'ad who welcomed those attending services during the past three months.

After a stimulating evening discussion and deliberation, the Va'ad closed its meeting with the traditional singing of *Oseh Shalom*.

—Ben Schalit, Recorder

## Onegs

All you have to do to sponsor an oneg is to think of the occasion and contact the synagogue office (861-6932). The cost of sponsoring a complete oneg is \$80 or, for partial sponsorship, \$50. You can also provide the food, flowers, etc. for a more personal touch.

## Food Bank

Please, don't forget our brothers and sisters in need. Keep filloing the shul's collection baskets with nonperishable food and other household items for the SF AIDS Foundation's residence program.

## The CSZ Cookbook

### Out of Our Kitchen Closets

Available through our synagogue office as well as through your local bookseller. Call 861-6932 to order copies for yourself and for Chanukah giving.



# DECEMBER

# כסלו-טבת

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		10 Kislev 1	11 2	12 3 Social Action Comm., 7:30pm	13 4 Services, 8:15pm Book Faire opens	14 5 Book Faire
15 6 Book Faire Brunch, 12-2pm Soviet Vigil, Union Square, 4:30pm	16 7 Book Faire	17 8 Book Faire	18 9 Soviet Vigil, Green & Baker, 11:30am Book Faire ends	19 10	20 11 Services, 8:15pm	21 12
22 13	23 14 Va'ad Meeting, 6:30pm Newsletter Deadline	24 15 1st Chanukah Light	25 16 2nd Chanukah Light	26 17 3rd Chanukah Light Ritual Committee, 6:30pm	27 18 4th Chanukah Light Services, 8:15pm	28 19 5th Chanukah Light
29 20 6th Chanukah Light Chanukah Home Visits, 11:30am Chanukah Party, Lake Merced Boat House, 2-6pm	30 21 7th Chanukah Light	1 Tevet 22 8th Chanukah Light Rosh Chodesh	2 23	3 24	4 25 Services, 8:15pm	5 26 Morning Service, 10:30am
6 27 Kaiser Brunch, 10:30am	7 28	8 29	9 30 Newsletter Mailing, 11 Grandview Terr., 7:30pm	10 31		

## Ritual Calendar

**Friday, December 4**  
Parsha: Vayishlach  
Mike Rankin & Nancy Snow

**Friday, December 11**  
Parsha: Vayeshev  
Paul Cohen  
The Torah will be read.

**Friday, December 18**  
Parsha: Miketz  
Rabbi Yoel Kahn & Aaron Frankel

**Friday, December 25**  
Parsha: Vayigash  
Bill Schilchter

**Saturday, December 26**  
Morning Service, 10:30 am  
Rabbi Yoel Kahn

**Friday, January 1**  
Parsha: Vay'hi  
Leslie Bergson & Steve Greenberg

**Friday, January 8**  
Parsha: Shemot  
Nancy Snow & Dana Vinicoff

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## Anniversaries

9 Jill Rose & Ann Kennedy  
14 Shelley Spiro & Gabrielle  
Kassner

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## Bikkur Cholim

### Chanukah Visits

Chanukah visits to Jewish elderly and their friends have been scheduled for Sunday, December 20. The congregation will continue its tradition of visiting the Park Board and Care Home and the Hillhaven Convalescent Center. We bring food, music, singing and "Yiddishkeit," and receive affection, appreciation and a warm feeling of performing an important mitzvah.

We will gather at the synagogue on Sunday morning at 11:30. Please plan on joining us. If you have questions, please contact any of the following members who were with us on the September High Holiday visits: Michael Bettinger, Howard Bobren, Phil Charney, Paul Cohen, Allen Craig, Allen Harris, Florence Nacamulli, David Stein, Mark Vogel, Eli Weinstein and Arthur Seidman.



tell them a bit about us. Irene is grinning up at me. I grin back. We both feel the stereotypes melting away.

John Hirsh, a costume designer from New York, is next. He is nervous. His lover, Herb, gives him an encouraging smile from the front row. They have been lovers for 20 years, supportive of each other, and very active in their congregation. But when they celebrated their 20th anniversary, their rabbi could not bring himself to acknowledge their *simcha*, although the joy of heterosexual couples celebrating their anniversaries is routinely acknowledged on Shabbat in their synagogue.

Agnes is next. She speaks beautifully of her ambivalence, and her unfailing love for her gay son; her fears for his safety and for his health; her happiness when he "settled down" in a long-term relationship. The many parents of gay and lesbian children listen intently.

Richard follows, speaking about his role as a gay parent, his coming out to his children ("Oh, good grief, Dad, we knew that long ago!"), his relationship with Ben.

It is time for questions. Most are excellent. One or two—including one from a man who wouldn't stay to hear the answer—are hostile and off the wall. They make the case against homophobia better than any of us could have.

A long day, but a good one.

**Friday, 30 October:** Shabbat dinner with the Northern California Region. But Irene, Richard, Rabbi Kahn and I have to leave before the food (can you imagine?) to go to services at Or Chadash, our sibling congregation. The congregation meets in a wing of the Unitarian Church in "New Town," and they do make a joyful noise! Rabbi Kahn delivers a wonderful sermon, and afterwards many members, who have never met a rabbi like this before, have a great time talking to him. Reminds me how lucky we are.

**Shabbat:** Services for 3,500 in the "Grand Ballroom" of the hotel. Beautiful music, "dedicating" the new UAHC songbook for congregations. Two Debbie Friedman songs in it. Rabbi Schindler gives the traditional "Presidential Sermon," a powerful call to action, compassion and social justice. I decide



the days of the "great rabbis" are not over.

After dinner, I pull out the costume I've bought for Halloween, ready for a little fun on the town. The phone rings. If I miss the 10:30 pm Resolutions Committee meeting, every resolution we care about will fail, and the social-action agenda of Reform Judaism will be set back a decade. Oh sure. But I get back into my convention drag and head off for the meeting.

Mainly we work on the resolution submitted by Stephen Wise Temple in New York, calling for full acceptance of lesbians and gay men in mainstream congregations. The hang-up is employment discrimination. The CCAR, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, is preparing a statement which we hope will end barriers to gays and lesbians in the Reform rabbinate once and for all; but it won't be ready until 1989. They have asked us not to include anything on the subject in the meantime.

It's a tough issue. Every one of us know rabbis, cantors, educators and administrators who have been fired when their homosexuality is discovered, or who remain painfully closeted. But we finally decide to include a statement opposing discrimination in employment, but not mentioning rabbis specifically. This pleases no one, but seems the best way to get the resolution passed.

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**Sunday, November 1:** Sha'ar Zahav is to receive the Irvin Fain Social Action Award for our work on behalf of people with AIDS and Central American refugees, but I am rounding up my panel for the AIDS workshop (one of four offered concurrently) and have to miss it. We are trying to show the delegates a model of an AIDS workshop to duplicate in their own regions, encouraging them to move away from strictly clinical information (though they get that, too) and respond to AIDS on a feeling level. Rabbi Danny Freedlander talks about his last months with his brother, who died of AIDS last spring. A Milwaukee physician has brought one of his patients with him: a beautiful, articulate man. I finish with a true story of a hospital nurse, caring for an AIDS patient with shaking chills who couldn't get warm. The nurse took off his clothes and got into bed with his patient, holding him close until the man fell asleep. Most of the audience understands.

**Monday, November 2:** Early breakfast with the AIDS Committee and Surgeon General Koop. It's good to be able to talk to him privately, but not reassuring. He's "fed up with the small minds in the administration" and is thinking of resigning. He never had access to the president. A vaccine is a long way off.

Later, after Koop addresses all 3,500 delegates, the resolutions begin. Central America, nuclear disarmament, peace in Israel, with justice and security for all. All the votes are nearly unanimous, all going the way I hope they will.

Finally AIDS. The lines begin at the pro and con microphones. Speaker after speaker insists we include a section opposing mandatory testing! We do. The anti-discrimination clause is strengthened to prohibit discrimination in health-care facilities (we had forgotten that one). A young rabbi adds a section on sex education in the religious schools, at every grade level. Not a homophobic remark is heard, and the resolution, far better than the one our committee wrote, passes almost unanimously! We can hardly believe it. Clearly, we have underestimated these people.

How much we've underestimated



## UAHC Biennial

them becomes clear when the "welcoming lesbians and gays" resolution comes up a few minutes later.

I speak first, reminding the delegates how many lesbian and gay Jews are alienated. I insist that they take seriously the command to "welcome the stranger," especially since these "strangers" are their children, their brothers and sisters, their friends and co-workers. A rabbi from Queens speaks next, saying that the resolution flies in the face of 3,700 years of Jewish tradition, and he wouldn't hire one of us anyway. There is a smattering of applause and a few boos.

Rabbi Helene Ferris speaks next, telling the delegates that if they come out for the blacks in South Africa, the refugees in Central America and the Jews of Ethiopia, then turn their backs on Jews who are homosexual, they are all a bunch of hypocrites and should be ashamed of themselves! Lots of applause for Helene, but very little for the next speaker, a man from Miami who says we are poor role models.

Finally, the last speaker rises—Martin Becker, president of a synagogue in New York. He will vote for the resolution with great reluctance, because he and his congregation are outraged that it does not also prohibit discrimination against lesbian and gay rabbis! He assures the delegates that he will bring a resolution to the next biennial which will do just that. The loud applause that follows is well noted by the CCAR members present.

It is all over but the shouting. The vote isn't unanimous—probably a fifth of the delegates vote against us—but we are quite willing to settle for 80 percent!

We got a lot done, but plenty is left to do. That's for another day. For now, we can be very proud of our five days in Chicago. It was wonderful!

(Except for that one Chinese restaurant, but that's another story.)

—Mike Rankin, UAHC Liaison

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## A Letter of Thanks

Dear Friends,

Last month the Gaily Forward published an article in which I explained that one of the anti-cancer chemotherapy drugs with which I was treated almost two years ago, has caused a bone marrow disorder which inevitably leads to fatal leukemia. The only potential cure is a bone marrow transplant. Before this procedure can be attempted I need to find a donor "match." In the article I requested that people contact Allan Gold (929-9524) if interested in taking the initial screening blood test to determine if we are a potential tissue type "match." The response to that request for help has been extraordinary and I want to thank everyone who has volunteered to take the blood test. It is impossible to describe how much it means to me for so many people to have expressed a desire to join the bone marrow donor registry and to be screened on my behalf. (There is still time to sign up! Call Allan as soon as possible and leave your name and evening phone number on his answering machine.)

The medical events of these last few weeks have been very difficult. It has been the response of my friends—led by those in the Sha'ar Zahav community—which has sustained me. I want each of you who has responded with some act of concern and kindness to know how very much you have done for me. I received food, telephone calls, notes bearing good wishes, even blood (thank you O+ donors!) from this incredible circle of friends. Thank you all.

Special thanks to Beth, to Rabbi Kahn for his efforts to mobilize the rabbinical community, to public relations and networking maven Sharyn Saslafsky, to the dynamic trio Gary Glasser, Sen Talley and Susan Unger, to Allan Gold, whose answering machine has been yelling for mercy, and to Jerry Rosenstein for his loving nature and cast-iron stomach during all the recent medical procedures. Warm thanks to Jackie Winnow, and to Donna Yutzy and the entire Bay Area Career Women board for their special help. With thanks and love.

—Cheryl Orovis

## High Holy Day Contributions

We are pleased to acknowledge the following people who responded to our appeals at High Holy Days with contributions. Please note this is only a partial list. The office is still processing acknowledgements, and the names of many more contributors will appear in the January issue of the *Forward*.

Jody Adelberg  
Bill Ashley-Dobbin  
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Susan Unger  
Dana Vinicoff  
Peter Vishniac  
Mark Vogel  
Stephen Walters



# So Ask Aunt Yente

Dear Aunt Yente,

Recently I decided to begin to observe the rule about going to the Mikvah every month, after my period is over. But then the people where I went asked me whether I was purifying myself for my husband, and whether I had let enough days pass since seeing blood before coming to immerse myself. I began to explain that I was in a loving relationship with another woman. Now they won't let me come back. What can I do?

Annoyed on Ashbury

Dear Annoyed,

Aunt Yente is *zehr* sympathetic over your *tsurus* from telling people what they don't want to hear. Would you believe, even Aunt Yente sometimes has such problems. But as for your question, Aunt Yente must admit she isn't so crazy about connecting the mikveh, the ritual bath, with the wonderful cycle a young woman has each month. Even after hearing many creative interpretations, she herself can't forget the original reason, which was to purify what was unclean. After Aunt Yente does something wrong, maybe, or after listening to the president on TV, so she might look for purification; but not because of the miracle of how life begins. Better she should say a *shehechiyohnu*.

But, if you've been listening to your Aunt Yente, so you know that good for her she doesn't always say is so good for other people. (True, she sometimes give an *armeile* a little *twistele*, but always in a gentle, Yente-like manner.) (Did you know that gentle and Yente are *eppes* the same word? But that's another column.) So if for you the mikveh every month makes sense, so *gay goezinte haight* (which is not a migration from the Castro to the Panhandle, but means you should go in good health) (you shouldn't catch cold). But this doesn't answer your problem, about the embarrassing questions the people there ask. (What they ask at the mikveh, Aunt Yente means. What they ask you in the Castro is not Aunt Yente's department.)

So unless you asked for their advice, so none of these questions are any of their business (Who do they think they are? Aunt Yente?) and you certainly shouldn't feel guilty for not answering. You might want to tell them that a modest daughter of Israel couldn't

think of answering such questions. But on the other hand, Aunt Yente can't let you lie, even to such what we would call in Yiddish, homophobes. Very important to our religion is the idea that there is right and there is wrong, and that wrong is wrong even if to people we don't like, and even to accomplish something good. (You should please remember, however, that complete frankness is not called for if Aunt Yente asks you whether she has lost weight.)

So how can you find a mikveh without an inquisition? So let Aunt Yente tell you that mikveh is a short way of saying *mikveh mayim*, which means simply a gathering place from waters. The rabbis made it a little less simple; for example, from rain or melting snow the water must be standing in a pool, but from a spring even flowing is all right. And today mikveh has come to mean so many cubits of rain water which had touched other water and is in a building with tiles and admission hours and trustees and people can fight over who can use it and what rabbis are entitled to ask each other embarrassing questions. But, for what the Torah originally had in mind, so there are beaches, there are lakes, there are even those redwood tanks that you would in the old country

call *heiyshe shissels*. (You think we didn't have hot tubs in the old country? Only there we would throw in a few chickens and a couple nice onions and you could relax your muscles and cure a cold at the same time.) (It's the fresh dill that makes that joke special.) So all these beautiful places are gatherings of waters, are mikvehs, and Aunt Yente has to say she feels cleaner from being with the tidepools or the redwoods than from all the people asking questions.

This doesn't mean, you understand, that Aunt Yente will not fight to her last drop of borsht for you to use the "real," industrial-strength mikveh along with everyone else; but to put it in a single word, so why bother?

Aunt Yente

Dear Aunt Yente,

Is there a Yiddish expression for eating too much?

Anxious on Anza

Dear Anxious,

No.

Aunt Yente

Aunt Yente loves to receive your questions about Jewish law and ritual matters. Just write to Aunt Yente in care of the *Forward*, 220 Danvers at Caselli, San Francisco, CA 94114. All material Copyright © 1987 Congregation Sha'ar Zahav.



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## Yahrzeits

- 2 (11 Kislev) Frank Chesir, father of Daniel Chesir
- 4 (13 Kislev) Ben Rudman, uncle of Rick Crane
- 5 Charles Staub, grandfather of Wendy Weiss
- 6 Susie Morgenstein, cousin of Judy Macks
- 9 (18 Kislev) Jacob Koshover, grandfather of Sherie Ann Koshover
- 9 Frieda Shaber, mother of David Shaber
- 10 David Abbuehl, cousin of Abigail Abbuehl
- 10 Sherman Kalis, brother of Betty Kalis
- 13 Barbara Mendelow, sister of Mark Mendelow
- 14 Meyer Paker, brother of Perry Paker
- 16 David Goldware, grandfather of Robert Goldware
- 16 Sonia Lazarus Porter, grandmother of Jane Graeven
- 18 Henry Cipriani, friend of Marc Lipschutz
- 18 Reuben Ritz, stepfather of Barry Siegel
- 20 Norman Kramer, friend of Jim Dobkins
- 20 Valentine Simon, mother of Robert Simon
- 20 Alfred Simon, brother of Robert Simon
- 20 Theodore Simon, father of Robert Simon
- 21 Thelma Glickman, mother of Rochelle Glickman
- 22 Chester Wisniewski, father of Catherine Wisniewski
- 23 Harold Berger, father of Don Berger
- 23 Ruth Rosenfeld, aunt of Alita Rosenfeld
- 25 A. Martin Lipschutz, father of Marc Lipschutz
- 25 Michael Ward, lover of Mark Freeman
- 26 (5 Tevet) Louis Charney, father of Philip Charney
- 27 Lillian Abbuehl, grandmother of Abigail Abbuehl
- 27 (6 Tevet) Bayla Schneidman, sister of Daniel Chesir
- 27 Harry Hilsenrad, grandfather of Marjorie Hilsenrad
- 28 (7 Tevet) Jacob Cohen, father of

Carol Cohen

30 Jack Ellison, father of Samuel Ellison

31 Sam Kimerling, grandfather of Allyce Kimerling

## Education Committee

### Books and Brunch

Sha'ar Zahav is celebrating Jewish Book Month and Chanukah with (what else?) a brunch. On Sunday, December 6, from noon to 2 pm, the Education Committee invites you to a brunch and a chance to visit the Book Faire. Enjoy bagels and lox while browsing. Several members, including Andy Zimmerman, David Stein and Leslie Bergson, will introduce you to some of their favorite Jewish literature. As there is no free brunch we must charge \$5 per person. This charge includes a box of Chanukah candles.

**Book Faire:** The *People of the Book Celebrate the Book* is the theme for Jewish Book Month. Beginning on Friday, December 4 and continuing until December 9, the Education Committee will hold a Book Faire in Sha'ar Zahav's library. If you remember the exciting exhibition held last year, you have some idea of the wonderful selection of books, menorahs, candles, and gifts showcased at our Book Faire. This year's will be even better. It's a great opportunity to browse through the newest and best Jewish publications. And remember, Chanukah begins the following week. So here's the chance to get your gift giving done, too.

## Resolution

The following resolution was unanimously adopted by the Board of Congregation Sha'ar Zahav, November 9, 1987:

The Va'ad of Congregation Sha'ar Zahav hereby commends and thanks Jacqueline Letalien for her exemplary service to the congregation as office manager. We wish her the best of luck.

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

## Birthdays

- 1 Yoram Gal
- 2 Thomas Yazman
- 4 Michael McCormick
- 4 Alan Schrager
- 8 George Lucas
- 8 Merry Luskin
- 10 Sonia Douglass
- 10 Cindy Icke
- 11 Abraham Cohen
- 12 Ralph Frischman
- 12 Bill Goldstein
- 12 Walt Leiss
- 14 Jill Rose
- 15 Philip Charney
- 15 Ron Lezell
- 19 Don Albert
- 19 David Shaber
- 20 Hannah Cohen-Blair
- 23 Evan Kuluk
- 24 Ellen Kugler
- 25 G. Murray Miller
- 26 Jose Luis Moscovich
- 29 David Masson
- 30 Leslie Bergson



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## Rabbi Yoel Kahn

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**Services** are held every Friday evening beginning at 8:15 pm, with an Oneg Shabbat following services. Services are generally held on the last Saturday of each month at 10:30 am—check calendar for each month.

### Committee Chairs:

*Bikkur Cholim*, Paul Cohen  
*Brotherhood*, by committee  
*Building*, David Gellman  
*Bylaws*, Richard Inlander  
*Family/Children's Havurah*, Sue Douglass & Jill Rose  
*Education*, Bill Goldstein  
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*Past Presidents Council*, Cheryl Orvis  
*Public Relations*, Sharyn Saslafsky & Andy Zimmerman  
*Ritual*, Steve Greenberg  
*Social Action*, Ami Zusman  
*Social Program*, by committee  
*Women's Havurah*, by committee

### Data Managers:

Alita Rosenfeld  
Jerry Rosenstein

### Office Manager:

(To be filled)

**Synagogue Office:** To be announced. Please leave a phone message.

**Emergency Number:** In an emergency, the Congregation can be contacted outside of office hours by calling 420-9718.

**Congregation Sha'ar Zahav** (Congregation of the Golden Gate) is located in the Upper Market District of San Francisco at 220 Danvers at Caselli, which is one block south of the intersection of 18th & Market streets. By public transport, take MUNI bus 33 Ashbury to 18th & Danvers and walk one block south on Danvers to Caselli.

**Member** Union of American Hebrew Congregations and World Congress of Gay and Lesbian Jewish Organizations.

## Contributions

Sha'ar Zahav welcomes all contributions, of all sizes, to mark any event, and to any of our funds. Contributions will be acknowledged in the *Forward* unless requested otherwise.

Donations were made to Sha'ar Zahav's funds in past months by the following contributors:

### General Fund

Aaron Cooper & Eric Keitel, in honor of Sharyn Saslafsky's birthday, Richard Inlander's birthday, Alex & David's anniversary  
Perry Paker, in memory of Isidor Paker  
In memory of George Jalbert

### Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

Aaron Cooper & Eric Keitel, in honor of Rabbi Kahn's birthday  
Steve Greenberg, in honor of Rabbi Kahn

Tom Yazman, in memory of Rabbi Ben Marcus

### Torah Fund

Steve Greenberg, in honor of Nancy Meyer & Marilyn O'Keeffe's recent visit to S.F.

### Prayerbook Fund

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# CHANUKAH PARTY

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**TIME:** Sunday, December 20: 2-6 p.m.

**COST:** members - \$5; non-members - \$7;  
children - free

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